policy of procurement of telecom equipment and stores. Unutilized equipments due to change in requirement are redeployed.

(c) Does not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

Status of India as chip design centre

431. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGI REDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India can become a Chip Design Centre in the world;

(b) if so, whether the country has enough technical talent to cater to the existing and future demand from the Industry; and

(c) if not, the steps being taken to make India as a Centre of Chip Designing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. However, as the area is hi-tech and fast changing, continuous efforts to train and nurture talent would be required. A programme to develop special manpower for Very Large Scale Integration (VLSI)/chip design and related software involving 19 institutions is under implementation since 1998. It is proposed to expand the programme to include more institutions and emerging areas of applications during the Tenth Five Year Plan.

(c) Does not arise.

Out of order mobile telephones in Uttaranchal

†432. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that B.S.N.L's services in the State of Uttaranchal often remain out of order; and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) the steps proposed to be taken to improve the quality of Mobile cellphone services in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir. the services in Srinagar (Garhwal) area only are facing disruption due to prolonged State Power supply breakdowns and failure of OFC media due to road widening work being carried out by Border Road authorities.

(b) Various steps, like provision of additional Engine Alternators as Power back up and prompt preventive/corrective action to restore OFC media breakdown, are being taken to improve the quality of Mobile cellphone services in the State.

Telephone facilities in North-Eastern Region (NER)

433. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of villages in North-Eastem Region where telephone facilities have not been provided so far, district-wise/State-wise;

(b) the reasons therefor; and

(c) the number of villages where the aforesaid facilities proposed to be provided in North-Eastern Region during the current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) 15,170 villages in North Eastern Region are without telecom facilities as on 01.04.2003. District-wise/State-wise details are given in the Statement *(See* below).

(b) Permission to commission WLL system in NER could not be given by Government earlier due to security reasons. Permission was accorded in last week of August 2002. In the meantime part of WLL equipment was diverted to other needy circles. About 5439 VPTs to be provided on statellite could not be provided as the tender for the same was cancelled.